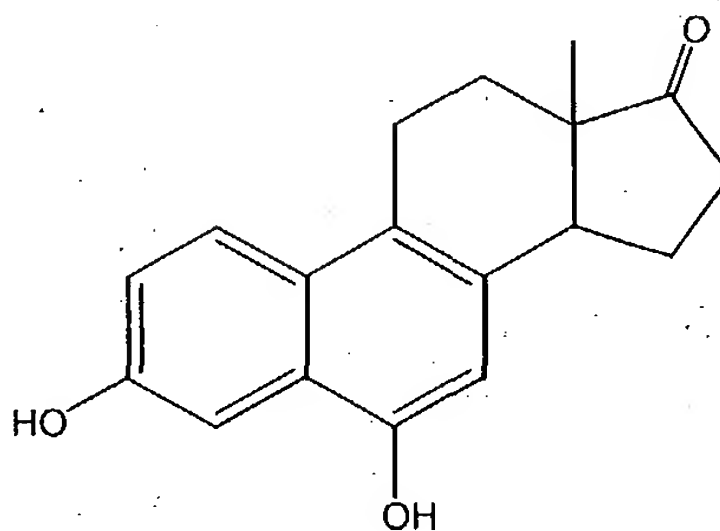


What is claimed is:

1. A process for preparing a compound having the structure



which comprises,

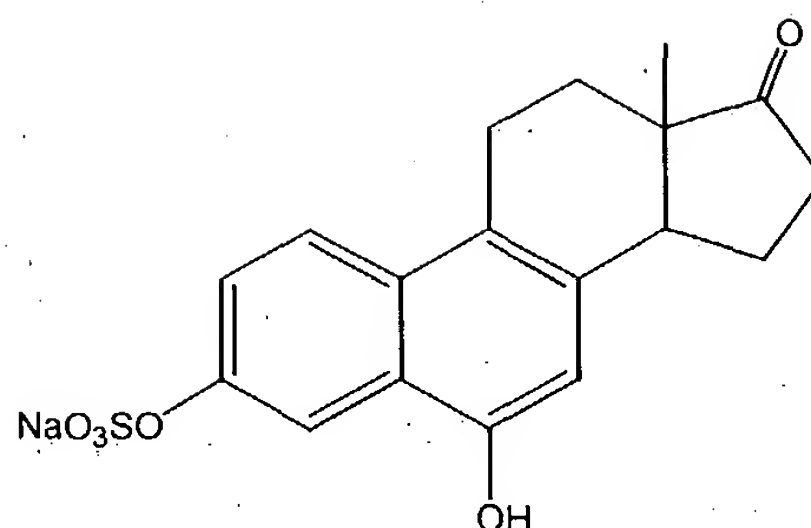
- (a) treating diacyl 6-keto-7-bromo-17 β -estradiol with an alkali carbonate or bicarbonate in a polar aprotic solvent to give 6-hydroxy-3,17 β -diacyldihydroequilenin;
- (b) treating 6-hydroxy-3,17 β -diacyldihydroequilenin with base in a protic solvent to give 6-hydroxy-3,17 β -dihydroequilenin;
- (c) treating 6-hydroxy-3,17 β -dihydroequilenin with an oxidizing agent to provide 6-hydroxyequilenin.

2. The process according to claim 1, wherein the base in step (a) is calcium carbonate.

3. The process according to claim 1, wherein the base in step (b) is potassium carbonate, and the solvent is an alcohol.

4. The process according to claim 1, wherein the oxidizing agent in step (c) is a chromium oxidizing agent, dimethylsulfoxide/oxalyl chloride, sulfurtrioxide-triethylamine complex, or $\text{Al}(\text{OC}_3\text{H}_7)_3$.

5. A process for preparing a compound having the structure



which comprises

- (a) treating diacyl 6-keto-7-bromo-17 β -estradiol with an alkali carbonate or bicarbonate in a polar aprotic solvent to give 6-hydroxy-3,17 β -diacyldihydroequilenin;
 - (b) treating the resulting 6-hydroxy-3,17 β -diacyldihydroequilenin with a silylating agent to give 6-O-silylated-3,17 β -diacyldihydroequilenin;
 - (c) treating the 6-O-silylated-3,17 β -diacyldihydroequilenin with a base in a protic or alcoholic solvent to give 6-O-silylated-equilenin-3,17 β -diol;
 - (d) treating the 6-O-silylated-equilenin-3,17 β -diol with an oxidizing agent to provide 6-O-silylated-equilenin;
 - (e) treating 6-O-silylated-equilenin with sulfurtrioxide-triethylamine complex to give triethylammonium-6-O-silylated-equilenin-3-sulfate;
 - (f) treating triethylammonium-6-O-silylated-equilenin-3-sulfate with an aqueous sodium base to give sodium-6-O-silylated-equilenin-3-sulfate; and
 - (g) treating the 6-O-silylated-3-equilenin-3-sulfate with a reagent suitable for removing the silyl group to give sodium-6-hydroxyequilenin-3-sulfate.
6. The process according to claim 5, wherein the silylating agent in step (b) is t-butyldimethylsilyl chloride.
 7. The process according to claim 5, wherein the oxidizing agent in step (d) is a chromium oxidizing agent, dimethylsulfoxide/oxalyl chloride, triethylamine/sulfurtrioxide, or $\text{Al}(\text{OC}_3\text{H}_7)_3$.

8. The process according to claim 5, wherein the base in step (f) is sodium carbonate or sodium hydroxide.
- 5 9. The process according to claim 5, wherein steps (e) and (f) are run sequentially, without isolating triethylammonium-6-O-silylated-equilenin-3-sulfate.
- 10 10. The process according to claim 5, wherein the silyl group is removed in step (g) with a fluoride based reagent.
11. The process according to claim 10, wherein the fluoride based reagent is sodium fluoride.
- 15 12. A process for preparing sodium-6-hydroxyequilenin-3-sulfate which comprises treating triethylammonium-6-O-silylated-equilenin-3-sulfate with an aqueous sodium base.
13. A compound which is 6-Hydroxy-3, 17 β -diacetoxydihydroequilenin.
- 20 14. A compound which is 6-O-t-butyldimethylsilyl equilenin-3,17 β -diacetate.
15. A compound which is 6-O-t-butyldimethylsilyl equilenin-17 β -ol.
- 25 16. A compound which is 6-O-t-butyldimethylsilyl equilenin.
17. A compound which is triethylammonium-6-O-t-butyldimethylsilyl-equilenin-3-sulfate with tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane.
18. A compound which is sodium-6-O-t-butyldimethylsilyl equilenin-3-sulfate.